

## **Chapter Two**

# **Urban Communities**

The Urban Communities chapter brings together the major elements that combine to make a community whole: housing, business centers, economic development and human services. By merging these elements into one chapter, King County emphasizes the importance each plays as part of a livable community.

The chapter first defines the Urban Growth Area, where most growth will occur, and major land uses within it. The chapter then provides the framework to guide the development of new urban communities and redevelopment of existing communities within the unincorporated portion of the Urban Growth Area.

---

# I. Urban Land Use

---

## A. Urban Communities

The challenge for King County and its residents is to create urban communities which provide the places and ways people want to live, as well as respond to the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods. Urban communities need more than physical infrastructure. They also need a broad range of amenities and human services that make them attractive and safe places to work and live, while protecting our physical environment and maintaining the quality of life we all value.

**U-101                      Development within the Urban Growth Area should create and maintain safe, healthy and diverse communities. These communities should contain a range of affordable housing and employment opportunities, school and recreational facilities and should be designed to protect the natural environment and significant cultural resources.**

### 1. The Urban Growth Area

The Growth Management Act requires the County to designate an Urban Growth Area where most growth and development forecasted for King County will be accommodated. By designating an urban growth area, King County and other counties in the State will:

- limit sprawling development,
- reduce costs by encouraging concentrated development,
- improve the efficiency of human services, utilities and transportation,
- protect rural areas, and
- enhance open space.

The Urban Growth Area (UGA) for King County is designated on the official Land Use Map adopted with this plan. The Countywide Planning Policies (CPP) provide the framework which the Metropolitan King County Council used when adopting the UGA as part of the 1994 Comprehensive Plan.

The UGA includes all cities within the County, including the rural cities, the cities' annexation areas, and land within the unincorporated part of the County characterized by urban-type growth. The UGA also includes the Bear Creek Urban Planned Developments east of Redmond. See Chapter 3, "Rural Legacy and Natural Resource Lands", for additional policy guidance on growth within the rural cities annexation areas.

King County's total UGA covers 460 square miles of the County's total area of 2,134 square miles. Cities comprise most of the land mass of the UGA, at 376 square miles; the unincorporated portion of the UGA is now about 84 square miles, according to the *1999 King County Annual Growth Report*.

**U-102                      The Urban Growth Area designations shown on the official Land Use Map includes enough land to provide the capacity to accommodate growth expected over the period 1992-2012. These lands should include only those lands that meet the following criteria:**

**a.                      Are characterized by urban development which can be efficiently and cost effectively served by roads, water, sanitary sewer and storm drainage, schools and other urban governmental services within the next 20 years;**

- b. Do not extend beyond natural boundaries, such as watersheds, which impede provision of urban services;
- c. Respect topographical features which form a natural edge such as rivers and ridge lines;
- d. Are sufficiently free of environmental constraints to be able to support urban growth without major environmental impacts unless such areas are designated as an urban separator by interlocal agreement between jurisdictions;
- e. Are included within the Bear Creek Urban Planned Development (UPD) sites; and
- f. Are not rural land or unincorporated agricultural or forestry lands designated through the Countywide Planning Policies plan process.

**U-103**                      **Parcels which are split by the Urban Growth Area boundary line should be redesignated to either all urban or all rural unless the parcel is split to recognize environmentally sensitive features, or the requirements of interlocal agreements or King County plans.**

**U-104**                      **Except for the Blakely Ridge and Redmond Ridge Fully Contained Communities designations in Policy U-171, no new Fully Contained Communities shall be approved in King County.**

## **2. Growth in Cities and Urban Centers**

The King County Comprehensive Plan directly affects land use planning decisions only in unincorporated King County. The cities, however, contain most of the County's economic base and its urban population and provide urban services to adjacent unincorporated areas. In addition, many public services vital to urban growth are provided to unincorporated areas by independent special purpose districts. The Countywide Planning Policies guide the development of Urban Centers, which are located in cities and should accommodate concentrations of housing and employment. The significant role of the cities and districts therefore must be recognized in County decision-making and through future planning efforts.

**U-105**                      **Most population and employment growth should locate in the contiguous Urban Growth Area in western King County, especially in cities and their Potential Annexation Areas.**

**U-106**                      **King County supports the development of Urban Centers to meet the region's needs for housing, jobs, services, culture and recreation. Strategies may include exploring opportunities for Joint Development or Transit Oriented Development, siting civic uses in mixed-use areas, creating public/private partnerships for infrastructure investments, and leveraging or utilizing existing County assets in Urban Centers.**

**U-107**                      **King County should concentrate facilities and services within the Urban Growth Area to make it a desirable place to live and work, to more efficiently use existing infrastructure capacity and to reduce the long-term costs of infrastructure maintenance.**

**U-108**                      **King County shall work with cities, especially those designated as Urban Centers, in collaborative efforts that result in transfers of density from the Rural Area.**

**U-109**                      **Development standards for urban areas should emphasize ways to allow maximum permitted densities and uses of urban land while not compromising the function of critical environmental areas. Mitigating**

measures should serve multiple purposes, such as drainage control, ground water recharge, stream protection, air quality, open space preservation, cultural and historic resource protection and landscaping preservation. When technically feasible, standards should be simple and measurable, so they can be implemented without lengthy review processes.

### 3. Urban Growth Area Targets

The Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) require the County and its cities to plan for 2012 population and employment growth target ranges for each jurisdiction.

Growth target ranges represent jurisdictions' policy choices regarding the amount of growth they intend to accommodate by 2012. King County and its cities have also developed target ranges for employment to foster a local balance between population and employment. The countywide and unincorporated King County's household growth target and employment target ranges are contained in the CPPs. The household targets for unincorporated King County have changed since 1994 due to incorporations and annexations.

**U-110** Land use policies and regulations shall accommodate growth target ranges of 23,000 to 30,000 households and 22,000 to 26,000 jobs by 2012, established in the Countywide Planning Policies for the unincorporated portion of the Urban Growth Area.

**U-111** King County shall provide adequate land capacity for residential, commercial and industrial growth in the urban unincorporated area. This land capacity shall include both redevelopment opportunities as well as opportunities for development on vacant lands.

The "Household Growth Target Reductions by Subarea: *Accounting for Recent Incorporations and Annexations*" Table establishes a breakdown by subarea of the King County new household targets for the Urban Growth Area. The table reflects annexations and incorporations that have occurred since the adoption of this plan in 1994. Although they may be refined through future planning with affected communities and adjacent cities, these ranges are intended to be used as a guide for future planning of land uses and decisions on services and infrastructure.

**Household Growth Target Reductions by Subarea  
*Accounting for Recent Incorporations and Annexations***

Subarea	Urban Acres April - 94	Acres Annexed 1994-1998	Original Household Target (94)	Household Reduction	Net Revised Household Target 1-1-98	Target Growth Range As of 1-1-98	
						Low	High
Bear Creek	2,747	265	3,400	328	3,072	2,572	3,572
East Samm.	15,606	791	7,650	388	7,262	6,812	7,712
Federal Way	10,564	2,129	3,750	756	2,994	2,544	3,444
Highline	6,336	248	1,650	64	1,586	1,336	1,836
Newcastle	9,250	3,675	3,050	1,212	1,838	1,388	2,288
Northshore	9,741	374	3,000	116	2,884	2,484	3,284
Shoreline	7,900	7,558	3,000	2,870	130	0	260
Soos Creek	20,787	7,063	9,100	3,093	6,007	5,507	6,507
Tahoma-Raven	7,279	5,772	3,400	2,696	704	304	1,104
Unincorporated Urban Total	90,210	27,875	38,000	11,523	26,477	22,947	30,007

- Notes:
1. Bear Creek Urban Area consists almost entirely of designated UPD/FCC.
  2. Only small area of Shoreline remained unincorporated in January 1998. Range reduced accordingly.
  3. Low and High range totals do not agree exactly with CPPs Appendix 2A because of Shoreline.

4. This table accounts for adjustments through January 1, 1998 only. Two cities, Kenmore and Sammamish, have incorporated since January 1, 1998. Growth Target ranges for these cities will be forthcoming and adjustments will be made to the King County unincorporated urban targets.
5. These household and job target ranges have been approved by the Growth Management Planning Council but have not yet been approved by the King County Council.

**U-112**                      **King County shall use population and employment target ranges to implement the Comprehensive Plan in urban communities. The target ranges allocated to subareas of unincorporated King County will be monitored and may be refined through future planning that includes communities, affected cities and service providers.**

## **B. Residential Land Use**

Housing is the major use of urban land in King County, occupying well over half of the County's developed land area. This Plan supports the creation of a full range of housing choices for County residents.

**U-113**                      **New residential development in the Urban Growth Area should occur where facilities and services can be provided at the lowest public cost and in a timely fashion. The Urban Growth Area should have a variety of housing types and prices, including mobile home parks, multi-family development, townhouses and small-lot, single-family development.**

### **1. Residential Densities**

The density of eight homes per acre expressed below is a long-term goal and would be an average density of single-family and multifamily developments. Single-family homes will continue to account for most of the land area used for new development in the County. This plan proposes ways to develop single-family homes more efficiently so that urban land is used more efficiently, homes are affordable, more housing choices are available and densities are adequate to allow for transit services.

**U-114**                      **King County shall seek to achieve through future planning efforts over the next twenty years, an average zoning density of at least seven to eight homes per acre in the Urban Growth Area through a mix of densities and housing types. A lower density zone may be used to recognize existing subdivisions with little or no opportunity for infill or redevelopment.**

**U-115**                      **King County should apply the Urban Residential, Low land use designation: to protect floodplains, critical aquifer recharge areas, high function wetlands and unstable slopes from degradation, and link these environmental features into a network of open space, fish and wildlife habitat and Urban Separators. The residential density for land so designated should be maintained at one unit per acre, provided that lands that are sending sites under the Transfer of Density Program may transfer density at a rate of at least four units per acre.**

**U-116**                      **Multifamily housing in the Urban Growth Area should be sited as follows:**

- a. In or next to Unincorporated Activity Centers or next to `Community or Neighborhood Business Centers;**
- b. In mixed use developments in centers and activity areas; and**
- c. On small, scattered parcels integrated into existing urban residential areas. New multifamily housing should be built to the scale and design of the existing community or neighborhood, while contributing to an areawide density that supports transit and allows for a range of housing choices. Over time, zoning should encourage a larger proportion of multifamily housing to be located on small scattered sites rather than on large sites.**

**U-117** Land zoned for multifamily uses should be converted to non-residential zone categories only after new multifamily sites are identified and rezoned to replace the multifamily housing capacity lost due to the conversion.

## **2. Minimum Density**

In accordance with Countywide Planning Policy LU-66(b), King County has included a minimum density requirement in its zoning regulations for all new urban residential development with a zoned density of four or more homes per acre.

**U-118** King County should apply minimum density requirements to all urban residential zones of four or more homes per acre, except under limited circumstances such as the:

- a. Presence of significant physical constraints, or
- b. Implementation of standards applied to a property through a property-specific development condition, special district overlay, or subarea plan.

## **3. Increases of Zoning Density**

While King County supports higher densities in the urban areas, increased densities that would be incompatible with existing neighborhoods or cause significant impacts on roads, services and the environment are discouraged. The following policies will guide decisions on application of densities and proposed rezones.

**U-119** Requests for increases in density of urban residential property zoned for one dwelling unit per acre must include a demonstration that the property does not meet the criteria of Policy U-115.

**U-120** King County shall not approve proposed zoning changes to increase density within the Urban Area unless:

- a. The development will be compatible with the character and scale of the surrounding neighborhood;
- b. Urban public facilities and services are adequate, consistent with adopted levels of service and meet GMA concurrency requirements, including King County transportation concurrency standards;
- c. The proposed density change will not increase unmitigated adverse impacts on environmentally sensitive areas, either on site or in the vicinity of the proposed development;
- d. The proposed density increase will be consistent with or contribute to achieving the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan, and subarea plan, if applicable; and
- e. The proposal is consistent with the adopted city comprehensive plan for the Potential Annexation Area where the rezone is located if the proposed density exceeds eight dwelling units per acre. If the city is not planning for urban densities and efficient land use patterns consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies, then this paragraph shall not apply.

**U-121** King County, when evaluating rezone requests for increases in density, shall notify adjacent cities, special purpose districts and local providers of urban utility services and should work with these service providers on issues raised by the proposal.

**U-122**                      **King County supports increases in urban residential density through a rezone or a proposal to increase density through the density transfer or density incentive programs when the proposal will help resolve traffic, sewer, water, parks or open space deficiencies in the immediate neighborhood.**

**U-123**                      **King County shall not support requests for residential density increases on lands located within the outer boundaries of the Noise Remedy Area as identified by Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.**

Development in the Urban Growth Area at a higher density than normally permitted by zoning will be allowed in exchange for public amenities such as low-income housing, preservation of designated historic features or extra energy conservation measures, or through the transfer of density credits from other parts of the County.

**U-124**                      **Density incentives should encourage private developers to provide innovative affordable housing, significant open space, trails and parks; to locate close to transit; to participate in historic preservation; and to include energy conservation measures exceeding state requirements.**

#### **4. Mixed Use Development**

Mixed use development combines higher density residential units with retail or office uses in the same building or within an integrated development on the same lot. Quality mixed use developments can provide convenient shopping and services to both residents of the development and those who live near by. They can help to build a sense of community, as neighboring merchants and residents get to know each other. Mixed use is traditional in older downtowns and commercial areas, where offices and retail typically occupy the first floor and residences are upstairs.

**U-125**                      **King County supports Mixed Use Developments in Community and Neighborhood Business Centers, the White Center Unincorporated Activity Center, and in areas designated Commercial outside of Centers.**

**U-126**                      **Design features of Mixed Use Developments should include the following:**  
**a.            Integration of the retail and/or office uses and residential units within the same building or on the same parcel;**  
**b.            Ground level spaces built to accommodate retail and office uses; and**  
**c.            Off-street parking behind or to the side of buildings, or enclosed within buildings.**

**U-127**                      **In a Mixed Use Development where residential and non-residential uses are proposed in separate structures and the residential uses are proposed to be constructed prior to the non-residential uses, the initial review of the development should be through a process that ensures an integrated design.**

**U-128**                      **In a Mixed Use Development, incentives such as increases in residential density or floor area ratio should be used to encourage the inclusion of public gathering spaces in the site design.**

#### **5. Urban Residential Neighborhood Design and Infill/Redevelopment**

King County residents can enjoy their urban neighborhoods both for their unique character and for the amenities they provide. Outdoor spaces need to be usable, attractive, comfortable, and enjoyable. The design of urban streets, including features such as parking strips, street trees, alleys and off-street parking all contribute to the character of urban neighborhoods. Careful site planning can incorporate neighborhood

features, contribute to aesthetic value, minimize site disturbance, conserve energy and, in some cases, reduce development costs. Neighborhood shopping, libraries, larger parks, high schools and public golf courses are examples of uses that provide amenities for nearby residents. Small retail establishments integrated into residential development (e.g. a laundromat or video rental store) can provide convenient services and help residents reduce automobile trips.

- U-129**                      **King County encourages innovative, quality infill development and redevelopment in existing urban areas. A variety of regulatory, incentive and program strategies could be considered, including:**
- a.        Special development standards for infill sites;**
  - b.        Assembly and resale of sites to providers of affordable housing;**
  - c.        Impact mitigation fee structures that favor infill developments;**
  - d.        Greater regulatory flexibility in allowing standards to be met using innovative techniques; and**
  - e.        Joint public/private loan guarantee pools.**
- U-130**                      **Single family detached homes, townhomes, duplexes and apartments shall be allowed in all urban residential zones, provided that:**
- A.        Apartments shall not be allowed in the R-1 zone unless fifty percent or more of the site is environmentally constrained; and**
  - B.        Apartments in R-1, R-4, R-6 and R-8 shall not be developed at densities in excess of 18 units per acre in the net buildable area.**
- U-131**                      **Urban residential neighborhood design should preserve historic and natural characteristics and neighborhood identity, while providing privacy, community space, and safety and mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists.**
- U-132**                      **Site planning tools, such as clustering, shall be permitted in order to allow preservation or utilization of unique natural features within a development.**
- U-133**                      **New urban residential developments should provide recreation space, community facilities and neighborhood circulation for pedestrians and bicyclists.**
- U-134**                      **Residential developments should provide a variety of housing types and lot patterns through lot clustering, flexible setback requirements and mixed attached and detached housing.**
- U-135**                      **Non-residential uses, such as schools, religious facilities, libraries and small-scale retail and personal services, should be integrated into urban residential neighborhoods to create viable neighborhoods with reduced dependence on the automobile. These uses should be sited, designed and scaled to be compatible with existing residential character.**

Multifamily residential development is important to King County's housing supply because it uses land and energy efficiently and provides opportunities for affordable rental and ownership housing. Multifamily development is defined as one building that contains two or more separate dwelling units. Multifamily developments can be apartments, duplexes, or townhouses.

- U-136**                      **Multifamily residential development should provide common and private open space, variation in facades and other building design features which may include varying window treatments, building colors and materials, and light fixtures that will give a residential scale and identity to multifamily development.**

Generally, larger parcels of buildable vacant land in the Urban Growth Area have been preferred for development. Development of these large parcels, especially for attached units at higher densities, often provoked concerns about compatibility due to their scale and design.

As larger vacant lots become increasingly scarce, attention will turn more and more towards smaller vacant lots often located within built neighborhoods (i.e. infill) and to redevelopment. Residential development proposals on small lots and redevelopment often can be an unobtrusive and desirable means of increasing density within existing neighborhoods. Infill development and redevelopment are necessary to achieve growth management objectives such as maximizing the efficient use of land and increasing the variety of housing choices and prices.

**U-137                      King County should support infill and redevelopment proposals that serve to improve the overall character of existing communities or neighborhoods.**

## **6. Residential Site Improvement Standards and Public Services**

The following policies govern King County land use regulations and functional plans that contain improvement standards for the review of proposed rezones, residential subdivisions, short subdivisions, multifamily buildings and construction permits.

**U-138                      Residential developments within the Urban Growth Area, including mobile home parks, shall provide the following improvements:**

- a.            Paved streets (and alleys if appropriate), curbs and sidewalks, and internal walkways when appropriate;**
- b.            Adequate parking which may vary depending on local transit service levels;**
- c.            Street lighting and street trees;**
- d.            Storm water control;**
- e.            Public water supply;**
- f.            Public sewers; and**
- g.            Landscaping around the perimeter and parking areas of multifamily developments.**

**U-139                      Common facilities such as recreation space, internal walkways, roads, parking, solid waste and recycling areas should be provided in multifamily developments.**

Neighborhood recreation space and parks are important amenities for residents. The higher the density, the more essential such amenities become to a desirable living environment. If the site of a proposed development is large enough, a park site dedication or private park site can be required as a condition of a rezone, subdivision or site plan approval.

**U-140                      Recreation space based on the size of the developments shall be provided on site, except that in limited cases, fee payments for local level park and outdoor recreation needs may be accepted by King County.**

**U-141                      Recreation spaces located within a residential development, except those for elderly or other special needs populations, shall include a child's play area.**

**U-142                      Recreation spaces located in residential developments in the Urban Area should include amenities such as play equipment, open grassy areas, barbecues, benches, trails and picnic tables.**

## C. Commercial Land Use

The Countywide Planning Policies call for a significant share of new jobs and housing to occur within cities and in Urban Centers, which are areas of concentrated employment and housing. The designated Urban Centers are to accommodate 15,000 jobs within a one-half-mile radius of a major transit stop, an average employment density of 50 jobs per gross acre and an average of 15 housing units per gross acre. All of the Urban Centers are in cities.

In addition to the Urban Centers, cities and unincorporated urban King County have existing intensive industrial, commercial and residential areas that will continue to grow and provide employment, services, shopping and housing opportunities, but not at the same level as Urban Centers. Three categories of centers are established for urban unincorporated areas of King County. Higher density, more-concentrated developed industrial and commercial areas are classified as Unincorporated Activity Centers. Mid-range centers are called Community Business Centers and smaller, local centers are called Neighborhood Business Centers. The locations of these centers are shown on the Urban Centers map at the end of this chapter. This plan also recognizes existing commercial and industrial development that is outside of Unincorporated Activity Centers, Community Business Centers and Neighborhood Business Centers.

**U-143                      Business/Office park developments should be located in or adjacent to an Unincorporated Activity Center. They may serve as a transition between office/retail areas and residential areas. They should be designed to take advantage of on-site or nearby structured parking to be compatible with the objective of higher employment densities.**

**U-144                      New commercial and office development shall locate in designated Unincorporated Activity Centers, Community and Neighborhood Business Centers, and in areas designated Commercial outside of Centers.**

Warehouse-style retail businesses, large retail complexes, stadiums, large churches and colleges are examples of land uses that serve as destinations from throughout the region. Such uses require a full range of urban services including transit, substantial parking, and access to arterials and freeways, and therefore should locate in the urban area where these services are available. In addition, these land uses have traffic and impervious surface impacts that are inappropriate for the Rural Area.

**U-145                      New facilities and businesses that draw from throughout the region, such as large retail uses, large public assembly facilities and institutions of higher education should locate in the Urban Area.**

### 1. Unincorporated Activity Centers

Unincorporated Activity Centers are the primary locations for commercial and industrial development in urban unincorporated King County. Currently, White Center is the only designated Unincorporated Activity Center, as other such centers are now parts of cities. The *White Center Community Action Plan* establishes the size and mix of uses allowed in the White Center Unincorporated Activity Center.

**U-146                      Unincorporated Activity Centers in urban areas should provide employment, housing, shopping, services and leisure-time amenities to meet the needs of the regional economy. The mix of uses may include:**

- a.        Health, human service and public safety facilities;**
- b.        Retail stores and services;**
- c.        Professional offices;**
- d.        Business/office parks;**
- e.        Multifamily housing and mixed use developments;**
- f.        Heavy commercial and industrial uses, when there is direct freeway or rail access;**
- g.        Light manufacturing; and**
- h.        Parks and open space.**

- U-147** Within Unincorporated Activity Centers, the following zoning is appropriate: Urban Residential with a density of twelve to forty-eight dwelling units per acre; Regional Business; Community Business; Neighborhood Business; Office and Industrial.
- U-148** King County may designate new Unincorporated Activity Centers or expand existing Unincorporated Activity Centers only through a subarea planning process which should address:
- a. The relationship of the entire center to its surrounding uses;
  - b. Availability of supporting public services;
  - c. The function of the center to other centers in the sub-region;
  - d. The need for additional commercial and industrial development;
  - e. The size and boundaries of the center; and
  - f. Zoning.
- U-149** The size, uses and boundaries of Unincorporated Activity Centers should be consistent with the following criteria:
- a. More than forty acres in size, excluding land needed for surface water management or protection of environmentally sensitive areas;
  - b. Retail space based on the amount of residential development planned for the surrounding area to provide for community and regional shopping needs; and
  - c. Retail space should not exceed sixty acres and 600,000 square feet unless it is served by direct freeway access by a principal or minor arterial and is well served by transit.
- U-150** Design features of Unincorporated Activity Centers should include the following:
- a. Safe and attractive walkways and bicycle lanes with access to each major destination;
  - b. Buildings close to sidewalks to promote walking and access to transit;
  - c. Compact design with close grouping of compatible uses;
  - d. Off-street parking in multistory structures located to the side or rear of buildings or underground;
  - e. Public art;
  - f. Public spaces, such as plazas and building atriums;
  - g. Retention of attractive natural features, historic buildings and established character;
  - h. Aesthetic design and compatibility with adjacent uses through setbacks, building orientation, landscaping and traffic control;
  - i. Screening of unsightly views, such as heavy machinery, outdoor storage areas, loading docks and parking areas from the view of adjacent uses and from arterials; and
  - j. Signs should be regulated to reduce glare and other adverse visual impacts on nearby residences, without limiting their potential contribution to the color and character of the center.
- U-151** Development within the designated White Center Unincorporated Activity Center, as shown on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map, shall be in accordance with the White Center Community Action Plan.

**U-152**                    **The White Center Community Action Plan establishes the following zoning as appropriate within the White Center Unincorporated Activity Center: Urban Residential with a density of twelve to forty-eight dwelling units per acre, Neighborhood Business, Community Business, Office and Industrial.**

**U-153**                    **In the White Center Unincorporated Activity Center, existing industrial uses should be zoned and regulated to preserve their use into the future. Conversion of industrial properties to other uses shall be strictly limited.**

## **2. Community Business Centers**

Community business centers are primarily retail developments designed to serve a nearby market area of 15,000 to 40,000 people. Community Business Centers should be sited so they do not adversely affect other centers and are easily accessible by automobile or public transportation. Community Business Centers should be designed to be compatible with adjacent residential uses, and should promote pedestrian and bicycle access.

**U-154**                    **Community Business Centers in urban areas should provide primarily shopping and personal services for nearby residents. Offices and multifamily housing are also encouraged. Industrial and heavy commercial uses should be excluded. Community Business Centers should include the following mix of uses:**

- a.        Retail stores and services;**
- b.        Professional offices;**
- c.        Community and human services; and**
- d.        Multifamily housing as part of a mixed use development, with residential densities of 12 to 48 units per acre when well served by transit.**

**U-155**                    **Designated Community Business Centers are shown on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map. Expansion of existing or designation of new Community Business Centers shall be permitted only through a subarea planning process. Redevelopment of existing Community Business Centers is encouraged.**

**U-156**                    **Within Community Business Centers, the following zoning is appropriate: Neighborhood Business, Community Business and Office.**

**U-157**                    **The specific size and boundaries of Community Business Centers should be consistent with the criteria listed below.**

- a.        More than ten acres and up to 40 acres in size, excluding land needed for surface water management or protection of environmentally sensitive areas;**
- b.        Designed to provide shopping and services for a market population of 15,000 to 40,000 people;**
- c.        Located one to three miles from an Unincorporated Activity Center or from another Community Business Center. May be located less than two miles from a Neighborhood Business Center when it is demonstrated the Neighborhood Business Center will not be adversely affected; and**
- d.        Must be located at the intersection of two principal or minor arterials.**

- U-158**                      **Design features of Community Business Centers should include the following:**
- a.        Safe and attractive walkways and bicycle lanes;**
  - b.        Close grouping of stores;**
  - c.        Off-street parking behind or to the side of buildings, or enclosed within buildings;**
  - d.        Public art; and**
  - e.        Retention of attractive natural features, historic buildings and established character.**

### **3. Neighborhood Business Centers**

Neighborhood Business Centers are shopping areas offering convenience goods and services to local residents. Neighborhood Business Centers are intended to be small and compatible with adjacent residential areas and often are used on the way to another destination (for example, a fuel stop before or after commuting). Sometimes they consist of only one use or business. Neighborhood Business Centers should be designed to promote pedestrian and bicycle access.

- U-159**                      **Neighborhood Business Centers in urban areas should include primarily retail stores and offices designed to provide convenient shopping and other services for nearby residents. Industrial and heavy commercial uses should be excluded. Neighborhood Business Centers should include the following mix of uses:**
- a.        Retail stores and services;**
  - b.        Professional offices; and**
  - c.        Multifamily housing as part of a mixed-use development with residential densities up to 12 units per acre when convenient to a minor arterial. Higher densities of 12 to 18 units per acre are appropriate when the Center is convenient to a principal arterial.**
- U-160**                      **Designated Neighborhood Business Centers are shown on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map. Expansion of existing or the designation of new Neighborhood Business Centers shall only be permitted through a subarea planning process. Redevelopment of existing Neighborhood Business Centers is encouraged.**
- U-161**                      **Within Neighborhood Business Centers, the following zoning is appropriate: Neighborhood Business and Office.**
- U-162**                      **The specific size and boundaries of Neighborhood Business Centers should be consistent with the criteria listed below.**
- a.        Ten acres or less in size, excluding land needed for surface water management or protection of environmentally sensitive features;**
  - b.        Designed to provide convenience shopping for a market population of 8,000 to 15,000 people;**
  - c.        Located on a minor arterial with adequate traffic capacity;**
  - d.        Served by intersections free of traffic congestion caused by topography or poor road design; and**
  - e.        Located one to three miles from another Neighborhood Business Center.**

- U-163**                      **Design features of Neighborhood Business Centers should include the following:**
- a.        Safe and attractive walkways and bicycle lanes;**
  - b.        Close grouping of stores;**
  - c.        Off-street parking behind or to the side of buildings, or enclosed within buildings;**
  - d.        Public art;**
  - e.        Retention of attractive natural features, historic buildings or established character;**
  - f.        Landscaping, which may include planters and street trees;**
  - g.        Appropriate signage;**
  - h.        Public seating areas; and**
  - i.        Architectural features which provide variation between buildings or contiguous storefronts.**

#### **4. Commercial Development Outside of Centers**

The Commercial outside of center (CO) Land Use designation recognizes commercial uses predating this plan that were located outside a designated center. The CO designation is also appropriate as a transitional designation within certain potential annexation areas. In these areas, the county will utilize the memorandum of understanding and applicable comprehensive plan policies to determine the appropriate zoning to implement this transitional designation.

- U-164**                      **Stand-alone commercial developments legally established outside designated centers in the Urban Growth Area may be recognized with the CO designation and appropriate commercial zoning. When more detailed subarea plans are prepared, these developments may be designated as centers and allowed to grow if appropriate, or may be encouraged to redevelop consistent with the residential density and design policies of the Comprehensive Plan.**

- U-165**                      **The CO designation may be applied as a transitional designation in Potential Annexation Areas identified in a signed memorandum of understanding between a city and the County for areas with a mix of urban uses and zoning in order to facilitate the joint planning effort directed by the memorandum of understanding. Zoning to implement this transitional designation should recognize the mix of existing and planned uses. No zone changes to these properties to allow other nonresidential uses, or zone changes to allow expansion of existing nonresidential uses onto other properties, should occur unless or until a subarea planning process with the city is completed.**

#### **5. Commercial Site Improvement Standards and Public Services**

The following policy governs King County land use regulations and functional plans that contain improvement standards for the review of proposed rezones and commercial construction permits.

- U-166**                      **Commercial, retail and industrial developments should foster community, create enjoyable outdoor areas and balance needs of automobile movement with pedestrian and bicycle mobility and comfort. Commercial and industrial developments shall provide the following improvements:**
- a.        Paved streets;**
  - b.        Sidewalks and bicycle lanes in commercial and retail areas;**
  - c.        Adequate parking for employees and business users;**
  - d.        Landscaping along or within streets, sidewalks and parking areas to provide an attractive appearance;**
  - e.        Adequate storm water control, including curbs, gutters and stormwater retention facilities;**

- f. **Public water supply;**
- g. **Public sewers; and**
- h. **Controlled traffic access to arterials and intersections.**

## **6. Industrial Development**

Maintaining a strong industrial land supply is an important factor in maintaining the County's economic base and providing family wage jobs. The following policies assure that industrial development is compatible with adjacent land uses while providing appropriate services for employees. In addition, King County is committed to helping return contaminated sites to productive use.

- U-167**                      **Within the UGA but outside Unincorporated Activity Centers, properties with existing industrial uses shall be protected. The County may use tools such as special district overlays to identify them for property owners and residents of surrounding neighborhoods.**
- U-168**                      **Industrial development should have direct access from arterials or freeways. Access points should be combined and limited in number to allow smooth traffic flow on arterials. Access through residential areas should be avoided.**
- U-169**                      **Small amounts of retail and service uses in industrial areas may be allowed for convenience to employees and users.**
- U-170**                      **King County, in collaboration with cities and the development community, should create and fund a process to clean up and reclaim polluted industrial areas in order to expand the land available for industrial development.**

## **D. Urban Planned Developments (UPDs) and Fully Contained Communities (FCCs)**

Within the designated UGA, development of large land ownerships may offer the public and the property owner opportunities to realize mutual benefits when such development is coordinated through the review process as an Urban Planned Development (UPD). Possible public benefits include greater preservation of public open space, proponent contributions to major capital improvement needs, diversity in housing types and affordability, and the establishment of the specific range and intensity of uses for the entire Urban Planned Development. A property owner and the public could benefit from the efficiency of combined hearings and land use decision-making, as well as the establishment of comprehensive and consistently applied project-wide mitigations guiding the review of subsequent land use approvals.

- U-171**                      **Sites for potential Urban Planned Developments (UPDs) may be designated within the established Urban Growth Area to realize mutual benefits for the public and the property owner. Three UPD sites have been designated by the County: Redmond Ridge (formerly known as Northridge) UPD, Blakely Ridge UPD and Cougar Mountain Village UPD. Future UPD sites in the Urban Growth Area shall be designated through a subarea planning process, or through a comprehensive plan amendment initiated by the property owner.**
- U-172**                      **The creation of Urban Planned Developments (UPDs) is intended to serve as a model for achieving a mix of uses, appropriate development patterns, and high quality design as well as providing for public benefits which shall include:**
  - a. **Open space and critical areas protection;**
  - b. **Diversity in housing types and affordability;**
  - c. **Quality site design; and**
  - d. **Transit and non-motorized transportation opportunities.**

Redmond Ridge and Blakely Ridge, located in the Bear Creek area of the County, were first designated for urban development in 1989 in the Bear Creek Community Plan. The urban designation of these

properties under the GMA was established in the Countywide Planning Policies in 1992 and affirmed in 1994. These Bear Creek UPD sites were included in the Urban Growth Area designated in the 1994 King County Comprehensive Plan. Since the adoption of the 1994 Comprehensive Plan, both Redmond Ridge and Blakely Ridge have been approved as Urban Planned Developments and King County has entered into development agreements governing the development of these sites. The legality of these development approvals was challenged and these legal challenges have been rejected. Therefore, these sites will be developed at urban densities.

Through the adoption of the King County Comprehensive Plan 2000 Update, King County reaffirms its urban designation of the Redmond Ridge and Blakely Ridge sites. In addition to the reasons that led the County (and the region) to originally include these sites within the County's UGA, these sites have now been approved for urban development. As such, they are characterized by urban growth within the meaning of the GMA and their inclusion within the County's UGA is appropriate.

Furthermore, significant infrastructure improvements have been made at these sites. The existence of these urban infrastructure improvements further supports a conclusion that these properties are characterized by urban growth and are appropriately included with the County's UGA.

The Growth Management Act allows counties to establish a process, as part of its UGA designation, for reviewing proposals to authorize new Fully Contained Communities (FCC). Criteria for approval of FCCs are contained in RCW 36.70A.350. If a county establishes in its Comprehensive Plan a process for authorizing FCCs, it must adopt procedures for approving FCCs in its development regulations. King County has established a new fully contained community, consisting of the two Bear Creek UPD sites; Redmond Ridge and Blakely Ridge.

- U-173**                      **King County has established a new Fully Contained Community. Two sites are designated through this plan shown on the Land Use Map as a Fully Contained Community: Blakely Ridge and Redmond Ridge Urban Planned Development sites located in the Bear Creek area. Nothing in these policies shall affect the continued validity of the approved Urban Planned Development permits for either of these sites. This FCC designation may be implemented by separate or coordinated FCC permits for the two sites.**
- U-174**                      **The population, household, and employment growth targets and allocations for the County's UGA in this plan include the Redmond Ridge and Blakely Ridge sites. Accordingly, the requirements in RCW 36.70A.350(2) that the County reserve a portion of the 20-year population projection for allocation to new Fully Contained Communities has been satisfied.**
- U-175**                      **The review and approval process for a Fully Contained Community (FCC) permit shall be the same as that for an Urban Planned Development (UPD) permit, except the following additional criteria shall be met, pursuant to the provisions of RCW 36.70A.350:**
- a.        New infrastructure (including transportation and utilities infrastructure) is provided for and impact fees are established and imposed on the FCC consistent with the requirements of RCW 82.02.050;**
  - b.        Transit-oriented site planning and traffic demand management programs are implemented in the FCC. Pedestrian, bicycle, and high occupancy vehicle facilities are given high priority in design and management of the FCC;**
  - c.        Buffers are provided between the FCC and adjacent non-FCC areas. Perimeter buffers located within the perimeter boundaries of the FCC delineated boundaries, consisting of either landscaped areas with native vegetation or natural areas, shall be provided and maintained to reduce impacts on adjacent lands;**

- d. A mix of uses is provided to offer jobs, housing, and services to the residents of the new FCC. No particular percentage formula for the mix of uses should be required. Instead, the mix of uses for a FCC should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, in light of the geography, market demand area, demographics, transportation patterns, and other relevant factors affecting the proposed FCC. Service uses in the FCC may also serve residents outside the FCC, where appropriate;
- e. Affordable housing is provided within the new FCC for a broad range of income levels, including housing affordable by households with income levels below and near the medium income for King County;
- f. Environmental protection has been addressed and provided for in the new FCC, at levels at least equivalent to those imposed by adopted King County environmental regulations;
- g. Development regulations are established to ensure urban growth will not occur in adjacent nonurban areas. Such regulations shall include but are not limited to rural zoning of adjacent rural areas, FCC permit conditions requiring sizing of FCC water and sewer systems so as to ensure urban growth will not occur in adjacent nonurban areas; and/or FCC permit conditions prohibiting connection by property owners in the adjacent Rural Area (except public school sites) to the FCC sewer and water mains or lines;
- h. Provision is made to mitigate impacts of the FCC on designated agricultural lands, forest lands, and mineral resource lands; and
- i. The plan for the new FCC is consistent with the development regulations established for the protection of critical areas by King County pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170.

For purposes of evaluating a FCC permit the following direction is provided: The term "Fully contained" is not intended to prohibit all interaction between a FCC and adjacent lands but to limit impacts on adjacent lands and contain them within the development site as much as possible. "Fully contained" should be achieved through the imposition of development conditions that limit impacts on adjacent and nearby lands and do not increase pressures on adjacent lands for urban development. "Fully contained" is not intended to mandate that all utilities and public service needed by an urban population both start and end within the property (since sewer, water, power, and roads, are of such a nature that the origin and/or outfall cannot reasonably both exist within the property boundaries), but that the costs and provisions for those utilities and public services that are generated primarily by the FCC (schools, police, parks, employment, retail needs) be reasonably accommodated within its boundaries and not increase pressure for more urban development on adjacent properties.

---

---

## II. Potential Annexation Areas

---

---

Citizens who pursue annexations or incorporations are a major force in redirecting King County's role in providing services. Citizens may initiate the annexation of unincorporated urban areas to cities or the incorporation of new cities. As annexations and incorporations are proposed, the policies in this section will guide King County's decision-making to ensure citizens' needs are met and a smooth transition from county government to city government occurs. After a city adopts its Potential Annexation Area, King County will work to develop a service agreement with the city prior to annexation.

The Interim Potential Annexation Areas Map illustrates potential annexation areas for each of the cities, areas of overlap and unclaimed urban unincorporated areas. The map was adopted by the Growth Management Planning Council (Substitute Motion 99-2). Adoption by the Metropolitan King County Council and ratification by the cities is also required. This map will be updated annually to reflect the decisions and actions that have been made regarding potential annexation areas, completed annexations and incorporations. Policies in this section also address incorporations and a joint planning process with the City of Snoqualmie.

- U-201**                      **King County should work with the cities to focus countywide growth within their boundaries and should support annexations within the Urban Growth Area when consistent with the King County Comprehensive Plan and Countywide Planning Policies. An annexation proposal is consistent with the King County Comprehensive Plan when:**
- a.        **The proposed annexation area is: 1) wholly within the Urban Growth Area and 2) within the city's designated Potential Annexation Area;**
  - b.        **The city is planning for urban densities and efficient land use patterns consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies;**
  - c.        **Adopted Countywide goals and policies for urban services, environmental and cultural resource protection will be supported; and**
  - d.        **Long-term protection of King County-designated Urban Separators is ensured.**
- U-202**                      **King County shall not support annexations or incorporations that would apply zoning to maintain or create permanent, low-density residential areas unless such areas are part of an urban separator or are environmentally constrained, rendering higher densities inappropriate.**
- U-203**                      **The Interim Potential Annexation Area Map, adopted as part of the Countywide Planning Policies illustrates the PAAs adopted in the comprehensive plans of individual jurisdictions:**
- a.        **King County should support the annexation of PAAs claimed solely by one city as shown on the interim PAA map, in accordance with policy U-201.**
  - b.        **Areas claimed by more than one city as shown on the interim PAA map should be resolved through interlocal agreements between the cities, with the participation of affected citizens.**
  - c.        **King County shall work with cities adjacent to unclaimed urban areas and service providers to develop a mutually agreeable strategy and time frame for annexation of these areas. The Interim PAA Map will be updated to reflect these changes, as needed.**

- U-204** Cities in King County have identified the contiguous areas to be annexed, called “Potential Annexation Areas” (PAAs). Individual city PAAs will be final when:
- a. The City and the County enter into a PAA Boundary Agreement identifying annexation areas; or
  - b. The City’s Comprehensive Plan reflects the area shown on the Interim Potential Annexation Area Map at the end of this chapter and does not include any areas that are jointly claimed by adjacent cities.

*U-205 regarding the Snoqualmie JPA was deleted in 2002.*

- U-206** King County shall favor annexation over incorporation within the Urban Growth Area. Incorporations should be supported only when annexation is not appropriate and when the formation of new cities is necessary to assure adequate facilities and services for growth consistent with the King County Comprehensive Plan and Countywide Planning Policies.

- U-207** After Potential Annexation Area boundaries have been finalized consistent with Policy U-204, King County shall work with the cities to jointly develop service agreements to address land use policies and consistent public improvement standards in the Potential Annexation Areas. This process shall include participation by federally-recognized tribes, governmental agencies, special purpose districts, other service providers, landowners and residents. The service agreement process should address, but is not limited to:
- a. Determining responsibility for upgrading facilities in Potential Annexation Areas where present facilities have been identified as insufficient, and establishing a financing partnership between the County, city and other service providers to address payment of costs to build new and improve existing infrastructure;
  - b. Providing reciprocal notification of development proposals in the Potential Annexation Areas and opportunities to provide mitigation for adverse impacts on County, city and other service providers’ facilities;
  - c. Giving cities, to the extent possible, the opportunity to be the designated sewer or water provider within the Potential Annexation Area, where this can be done without harm to the integrity of existing systems and without significantly increasing rates;
  - d. Modifying improvement standards for County roads, parks, building design and other urban standards;
  - e. Transferring local parks, recreation and open space sites and facilities, or determining park land dedication requirements;
  - f. Establishing that Potential Annexation Areas are principally for urban uses;
  - g. Making residential development density consistent with regional goals for promoting transit and efficient service delivery;
  - h. Continuing equivalent protection of County landmarks and historic resources listed on the King County Historic Resource Inventory;
  - i. Providing environmental protection for critical areas and designating permanent urban separators as required by Countywide Planning Policy LU-27;
  - j. Identifying the major service deficiencies within priority areas and establishing a schedule for resolving them, consistent with the Community Action Strategies;
  - k. Providing for adequate amounts of affordable housing, as required by Countywide Planning Policies FW-28 and AH-1 through AH-6;

- l. Maintaining existing equestrian facilities and establishing equestrian linkages; and**
- m. Establishing a timeline for annexation.**

**U-208 King County and the cities shall collaboratively address level-of-service standards and costs. King County and the cities may share the costs of needed capital improvement programs and other services.**

**U-209 If a city desires a level-of-service higher than King County's service standard, the city should be responsible for paying all of the incremental costs of the higher level-of-service above what the County would provide.**

---

# III. Economic Development

---

## A. Overview

King County's economy is the largest and most significant economy in the Puget Sound Region (King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties) and in Washington State. In 1998, King County had:

- 1,119,300 non-agricultural jobs or 43.1% of the State's 2,595,400 non-agricultural jobs and 68.1% of the Region's 1,644,300 non-agricultural jobs;
- A \$45.209 billion payroll or 52.7% of the State's \$85.8 billion payroll and 74.5% of the Region's \$60.6 billion payroll;
- 65,713 firms, excluding sole proprietorships or 35.7% of the State's 184,192 firms and 64.8% of the Region's 101,462 firms; and
- A population of 1,665,800 or 29.3% of the State's 5,685,200 population and 52.8% of the Region's 3,149,700 population.

The foundation for a vibrant and sustainable economy consists of several factors including a favorable business climate, a trained workforce, public infrastructure, land supply, predictable regulations, advancing technology, affordable housing, and a healthy natural environment.

The policies in this chapter are designed to continue King County's long-term commitment to sustainable economic development. They do so by promoting public programs and actions that support a strong, stable and diversified economy, one that is compatible with the environment and contributes to a strong and stable tax base.

The policies also recognize businesses and the workforce as customers of an economic development system; they support actions and programs that promote the strength and health of both groups.

General King County economic development policies include:

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>U-301</b> | <b>King County has a long-term commitment to sustainable economic development. Sustainable economic development shall mean economic development that does not exceed the ability of the natural or built environments to remain healthy while sustaining growth over the long-term.</b> |
| <b>U-302</b> | <b>King County policies, programs, and strategies shall recognize the importance of, and place special emphasis on, retaining and expanding home-grown firms in basic industries which bring income into the County and increase the standard of living of our residents.</b>           |
| <b>U-303</b> | <b>King County policies, programs, and strategies will place special emphasis on training low-income, low-skill residents for job opportunities with livable wages, benefits, and wage-progression and retention strategies.</b>  |
| <b>U-304</b> | <b>King County shall work to ensure that maximum economic benefit accrues to local businesses and workers when public funding is included in the construction or operation of large projects.</b>   |

**U-305                      King County recognizes the environment as a key economic value in the region that must be protected.**

King County's role in economic development is implemented at several levels as described in the following policies:

**U-306                      At the multi-county level, King County should partner with other counties, regional entities and the state, as appropriate, to devise and implement economic development policies, programs and strategies for the benefit of the region.**

**U-307                      At the countywide level, King County should partner with other jurisdictions, economic development organizations, the Port of Seattle, and others, as appropriate, to develop and implement policies, programs, and strategies that set the general framework for economic development within the county for the benefit of the county as a whole.**

**U-308                      Within the unincorporated area, King County should partner with local businesses, unincorporated area councils, and others, as appropriate, to develop and implement policies, programs, and strategies that promote appropriate local economic development.**

At all three levels, King County seeks to coordinate and partner with private and public organizations to pursue mutually beneficial outcomes.

**B.     Business Development – Creation, Retention, Expansion, and Recruitment**

King County's policies, plans, and programs should support a positive and healthy business climate that enables local firms to stay globally competitive, quality-oriented, technologically advanced, and able to pay good wages.

Industries and firms that export their products and services outside King County bring income into the county and are considered basic, in economic terms. About 30% of the county's basic jobs come from the export of manufactured goods; 42% come from the export of business services such as banking, insurance, accounting, legal, architectural, engineering, research and development, and computer services; and 28% come from exports associated with wholesale trade, transportation, and public utilities. Jobs in basic industry generally pay better than non-basic jobs and support the non-basic or secondary part of the county's economy. In general, nearly one-half of the jobs in the county's economy are basic and support the other half such as retail and personal services.

Local and national research over the last 20 years has concluded that homegrown, small businesses create the majority of new jobs in a local economy. Additionally, roughly one of every four jobs in the Puget Sound Region is dependent on international trade.

There is recognition, however, that the county's impact on the creation of new businesses is impacted by the amount of available industrial and commercial land in unincorporated King County, which has declined from approximately ten percent in 1994 to approximately 5.6 percent in 2000.

**U-309                      King County supports programs and strategies to help create, retain, and expand homegrown businesses in basic industries, particularly within the county's manufacturing and industrial areas.**

**U-310                      King County supports programs and strategies, in partnership with the Federal, State, and local governments and the private sector, that provide technical assistance to home-grown businesses including but not limited to:**

- a. Pollution prevention and assessments of contamination to enable manufacturers to remediate contaminated property to continue or expand production;
- b. Technological, efficiency, and managerial assessments to enable manufacturers to reduce costs and use smaller footprints for existing or expanded production;
- c. Mentoring, financial management training, and other technical assistance to disadvantaged businesses, particularly in the construction industry, to help them become competitive in the private sector.

**U-311** King County supports programs and strategies for the targeted recruitment of firms that will:

- a. Support the County's basic industries by providing services that help keep existing firms globally competitive, or
- b. Export their goods or services and/or have the potential for high levels of growth and wages.

**U-312** King County supports programs and strategies to expand international trade including those that:

- a. Promote, market, and position the County for increased export, import, and foreign investment opportunities;
- b. Provide technical assistance, training, and opportunities for local firms wishing to export.

**U-313** King County supports programs and strategies to preserve and plan for an adequate supply of industrial and commercial land including but not limited to:

- a. In compliance with the State of Washington Buildable Lands legislation – RCW 36.70A.215 – and in cooperation with the cities, inventory and monitor the use of industrial, commercial, and residential lands every 5 years. The first 5-year report is due to the State in 2002;
- b. In partnership with other jurisdictions and the private sector, advocate for a regional Geographic Information System to track the supply of industrial and commercial land;
- c. Actively apply for Federal, State, and other resources to help defray the costs of assessment, remediation, and redevelopment of private and/or public brownfields. Brownfields are defined as vacant or underdeveloped industrial/commercial sites with real or perceived contamination;
- d. Sell county-owned surplus industrial and commercial lands for development by the private sector;
- e. Promote the redevelopment and infill of industrial and commercial areas and explore the feasibility of using incentives to achieve this goal;
- f. Prevent the encroachment of non-industrial uses on industrially-zoned land and the rezoning of industrial land to other uses.

**U-314** King County recognizes that adequate infrastructure is essential to support existing economic activity and to attract new industry and development. The County therefore supports programs and strategies to maintain existing infrastructure and construct new facilities (transportation, utilities, schools, information, communications), including an adequate supply of housing, necessary to accommodate current and future economic demand.

The County recognizes the importance of traditional economic activities which may occur in conjunction with or as a byproduct of other business activities in the rural area. Such examples could include residents operating farms, ranches, logging operations or other small businesses and who use their equipment to perform excavation services for others. While it is not the intent of the county to develop these areas for commercial purposes, there is recognition that some proportion of landowners may undertake complementary, small-scale commercial activities. The county values and supports these types of economic activities in the rural area and does not wish to artificially limit them.

**U-315                      King County recognizes the importance of traditional economic activities that support a rural lifestyle. While it is not the intent of the county to develop the unincorporated rural areas for commercial activities, county policy, regulations and programs should support the preservation of traditional rural economic activities and lifestyles.**

### **C.    Workforce Development – Skilled Workers, Employer Involvement and Economic Opportunities**

King County should address the ongoing workforce challenges of the Puget Sound region. The robust economy of today and the last several years makes it very difficult for employers to find and retain both skilled and entry-level workers. At the same time, many disadvantaged county residents have difficulties gaining access to quality education, training, and support services needed to prepare them for the world of work. Meeting these challenges successfully will depend on better strategies and working relationships between business, government, labor, advocacy organizations, education and training institutions, and human service providers.

Jobs that pay wages sufficient to support families are vital to the quality of life. However, training, education, skill levels, and abilities vary from person to person. As such, it is important for King County to support job opportunities for all residents with entry level jobs being essential to helping low-income, low-skilled individuals enter the workforce, reduce their dependence on public resources, and move up and out of poverty.

A family wage is a wage that allows a family to meet its basic needs without resorting to public assistance and provides it some ability to deal with emergencies and plan ahead. This definition is taken from The Northwest Job Gaps Study, produced by the Northwest Policy Center, although the study uses the term livable wage instead of family wage. According to this study, the 1996 family (livable) wage for 11 urban counties was \$16.86 an hour or \$35,079 a year for a single adult with two children.

For context, the 1998 King County average annual wage, excluding software workers, was \$35,900. Adding the average annual wage for software workers -- \$291,000 -- increases the 1998 King County average annual wage to \$41,300. Adjusting the Northwest Job Gaps Study for inflation and costs specific to King County, the 2000 family wage is \$19.30 an hour or \$38,740 for a single adult with two children.

As defined for this Comprehensive Plan, an acceptable entry-level wage pays a minimum of \$8.00 per hour (to be reviewed annually and adjusted as appropriate), provides benefits, and offers workers wage progression opportunities. While an entry-level wage is a wage that provides workers greater economic incentive than does being on welfare, it is not a family-wage. Depending upon household size and income, persons making entry-level wages in King County most likely require public subsidies in the form of childcare, housing, food stamps and/or Medicaid. As skill levels and wages increase, workers become less dependent upon public subsidies as they approach a family-wage level defined above.

**U-316                      King County supports assuming a leadership role in workforce development as a member of the King County Workforce Development Council, established by the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998, composed of high-level representatives from business, local government, labor, education and training institutions, advocacy organizations and human service providers. The purpose of the Council is to coordinate and improve**

employment, training, literacy and vocational rehabilitation programs to meet the needs of the workforce system's two customers – employers and workers.

- U-317** King County supports programs and strategies to provide employment and training opportunities to low-income and low-skilled residents including:
- a. Programs that facilitate employer involvement in hiring workers with limited experience and skills, and provide successful strategies for skills training, job placement and retention for workers;
  - b. Training for and placement in jobs in growing industries that pay an entry-level wage of at least \$8.00 per hour (in year 2000 dollars), provide benefits, and offer workers wage progression opportunities. This hourly figure is to be evaluated during each update of this plan and adjusted to reflect changes in cost-of-living or other similar indices and consideration of market conditions;
  - c. School-to-work programs and effective alternatives for out-of-school youth;
  - d. Summer youth employment programs for at-risk youth.
- U-318** King County supports programs and strategies to address the barriers to entry-level wage employment including:
- a. Access to transportation by providing transportation information and services to jobseekers and workers;
  - b. Access to childcare by increasing the availability and affordability of quality childcare for low-income families.
- U-319** King County supports apprenticeship opportunities for disadvantaged populations on County public works projects in order to address the forecasted shortage of construction trades workers and to encourage family-wage job opportunities.
- U-320** King County supports workforce development programs that are integrated with the county's economic development strategies, such as training and employment as environmental clean-up technicians for low-income residents of brownfields communities.

## **D. Regional Plans, Regional Projects and Public-Private Partnerships**

King County will consider participation in (1) regional economic development plans and projects that provide benefits to multiple jurisdictions or (2) require a partnership between the public and the private sector to be feasible. For either regional plans and projects or public-private partnerships, the County will base its investment decision upon a full and thorough analysis of the public costs and public benefits of proposed projects.

- U-321** King County shall partner, where feasible, with jurisdictions and other stakeholders to develop subarea economic development strategies to promote development and redevelopment in areas that can accommodate growth.
- U-322** King County shall cooperate in efforts to establish and maintain county and regional economic development strategies to provide for orderly, sustainable, and equitable economic growth throughout the Puget Sound Region.

**U-323**

**King County should consider participation in the funding of regional economic development projects when the project meets the following guidelines:**

- a. The project should support a firm in basic industry;**
- b. At least 75% of the jobs created by a firm, excluding management positions, should pay a family wage.**
- c. The project is located within (1) an Urban Center or Manufacturing Industrial Center as designated in the Countywide Planning Policies, (2) other industrial areas, or (3) business/office parks within activity areas which can be supported by and promote transit, pedestrian and bicycle uses;**
- d. The firm or project will generate sufficient new tax revenue to repay the debt the County incurs to support the project. The preferred average coverage ratio over the life of county financing is two dollars of new revenue for every one dollar of incurred debt;**
- e. Other jurisdictions benefiting from a project must commit financial support based on a mutually agreeable pro rata funding formula. The funding formula will be established on a project-by-project basis;**
- f. The firm or project must create 1 new, permanent full-time, family-wage job for each \$35,000 of aggregate public investment;**
- g. The firm or project should create all jobs within 3-5 years from project completion.**

**U-324**

**King County shall foster the development and use of public/private partnerships to implement economic development projects and programs. At a minimum, these projects must demonstrate that they:**

- a. Cannot be accomplished solely by either sector;**
- b. Have an experienced and proven private partner(s);**
- c. Do not unduly enrich the private partner(s);**
- d. Provide tangible and measurable public benefits in terms of tax and other revenue, construction and permanent jobs, livable-wages with benefits and a wage-progression strategy, and public amenities;**
- e. Will use the King County Jobs Initiative, or other entities with similar programs, as their first source of referral for training and employing low-income, low-skill residents in entry-level and semi-skilled jobs.**

**U-325**

**Through local subarea planning and coordination with other agencies and organizations, King County should use zoning, incentives or other measures to ensure that an appropriate proportion of the land adjacent or near to major public infrastructure facilities is used to capitalize on the economic benefit of that infrastructure. The surrounding land uses should be buffered or compatible with economic development uses.**

---

# IV. Housing

---

## A. Housing Choice and Opportunity throughout King County

Adequate choices and opportunities are essential to fully address the spectrum of housing needs for all King County residents. A basic goal of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) is to encourage affordable housing. Likewise, the King County Comprehensive Plan promotes affordable housing for all County residents by supporting adequate funding, zoning, and regional cooperation to create new and diverse housing choices in communities throughout the County.

Most housing is financed by and developed in the private sector. The ability of the private sector to develop affordable housing is affected by a wide range of market forces. Local government actions such as land-use policies, development regulations and infrastructure finance also have a significant impact on housing affordability.

Public funding and incentive programs are essential to address housing needs of lower-income County residents, including people with special needs, such as the elderly and people with disabilities. The policies in this chapter address low-cost housing development, preservation and assistance programs needed to ensure safe and adequate housing for lower-income and special needs residents.

In addition, the King County Consortium represents unincorporated areas and all County cities except Medina, Normandy Park and Seattle. This Consortium prepares a three-year Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan which outline the needs, resources and housing goals to be achieved. An annual action plan details specific housing and community development objectives.

### 1. Range of Housing Choices

Interjurisdictional cooperation and public/private partnerships are needed to address the full range of critical housing needs.

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>U-401</b> | <b>King County shall work with cities and the private sector to encourage a wide range of housing within the Urban Growth Area to meet the needs of our diverse population, support economic growth, ensure an equitable and rational distribution of low income and affordable housing throughout the County and provide housing choices for people of all income levels.</b>  |
| <b>U-402</b> | <b>Through subarea and regional planning with cities, incentives programs and funding initiatives, King County shall plan for housing to meet the needs of all economic segments of the population throughout the Urban Growth Area and within Rural Towns. King County shall plan for construction or preservation of housing units affordable to households as follows:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>24% of housing stock should be affordable to households below 50% of the King County median income;</b></li><li>• <b>17% of housing stock should be affordable to households between 50% and 80% of the King County median income;</b></li><li>• <b>20% of housing stock should be affordable to households between 80% and 120% of the King County median income; and</b></li><li>• <b>39% of housing stock should be affordable to households above 120% of the King County median income.</b></li></ul> |

Meeting these objectives will entail providing sufficient land for a variety of affordable housing such as higher density single-family homes, multifamily properties, manufactured housing, accessory apartments and mixed-use developments.

- U-403** King County, in partnership with other jurisdictions, shall evaluate achievement of Countywide and local goals for housing for all economic sectors of the population by analyzing housing indicators, adopted land use regulations, actions that encourage development and preservation of low and moderate-income housing and the effect of market factors on housing development. The results of this evaluation shall be used to develop new or revised policies, programs, regulations, and incentives to better meet the Countywide Planning Policies' housing goals.
- U-404** King County should work with cities to increase opportunities for affordable housing development by assuring there is sufficient land capable of being developed for multifamily housing, small lot single-family homes and townhouses, and manufactured housing parks.
- U-405** King County should work with other jurisdictions to eliminate barriers for low-income and special needs housing development.
- U-406** King County should support housing development that is compatible with surrounding uses by:
- a. Providing information on potential development sites;
  - b. Funding services, amenities, infrastructure and access improvements;
  - c. Developing public financing techniques which give housing development and redevelopment in preferred areas a market advantage; and
  - d. Making transit and rideshare services available.
- U-407** King County should encourage land use and investment strategies to stimulate mixed-use and mixed-income developments as a way to integrate neighborhoods and increase housing choices.
- U-408** King County should encourage affordable housing through redevelopment of non-residential buildings, such as schools and commercial buildings, in locations suitable for housing and in ways that preserve significant historic features where appropriate.
- U-409** King County should encourage the development and preservation of residential buildings that have shared facilities, such as single-room occupancy hotels and boarding homes, to provide opportunities for lower rents.
- U-410** King County shall provide opportunities and encourage other jurisdictions to provide opportunities for lower-cost housing types by allowing manufactured housing on single-family lots and accessory apartments within single family homes.
- U-411** King County should explore adding affordable housing as a benefit criteria in the Transfer of Development Credits program, especially as the program is expanded to include incorporated areas of King County.
- U-412** All Urban Planned Developments (UPDs) and other large housing developments shall provide a mix of housing types and densities, including

housing that is affordable to low-, moderate-, and middle-income households.

## **2. Ensuring and Expanding Affordable Housing Resources**

- U-413** King County should initiate and actively participate in regional solutions to critical affordable housing needs. Cities, community and housing representatives should be invited to identify and implement solutions.
- U-414** King County should work with cities and community representatives to establish new, countywide funding sources for housing development, preservation and related services, such that each city and King County contribute on an equitable basis.
- U-415** King County should work with other jurisdictions, housing developers, and service providers throughout the state to urge federal and state government to expand both capital and operating funding for low-income housing, including low-income housing for people with special needs.
- U-416** King County should work with jurisdictions and housing providers across the state to urge state and federal governments to expand funding for direct assistance services such as rental assistance and emergency services.
- U-417** King County should participate in developing and sustaining a coordinated, regional response to homelessness that includes access to homelessness prevention services, emergency shelter, transitional housing, permanent affordable housing, and appropriate support services for homeless families, single adults, and youth.

## **B. Affordable Housing Development**

The supply of affordable housing serving low, moderate and middle-income households has not kept up with the increasing demand in the Puget Sound region due to the soaring costs associated with new housing construction. In King County today, a substantial need exists for low-income rental housing and for moderately priced homes that can be purchased by first-time homebuyers.

Existing units will provide some of the affordable housing needed for low-income households in the future. However, with the projected growth in the number of low to moderate income households and the short supply of lower-cost housing available today, new construction must include affordable housing. Efforts to provide sufficient land and infrastructure and reduced development costs will help make new units affordable. In addition, a combination of incentives programs and funding will help keep rents affordable and expand opportunities for first-time homebuyers.

### **1. Development Incentives for Low and Moderate-Income Housing**

Incentives that will help developers provide low and moderate-income housing include reduction in development costs or an expansion of the development potential on the property.

- U-418** Density bonuses and other incentives should be available to both single-family and multifamily developments that provide rental or ownership housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households.
- U-419** To reduce development costs for affordable housing projects, King County shall exempt payment of impact fees for housing units that will serve low income households with incomes which do not exceed 80% of the median.

**U-420**                      **King County should explore methods to expedite plan reviews for housing projects serving low- and moderate-income households, in coordination with other incentive or subsidy programs.**

**U-421**                      **King County shall explore coordination of incentive programs with cities to develop common program guidelines and reduce administrative costs.**

## **2. Housing Development Subsidies**

Federal, state and local housing programs provide vital assistance to low-income households. King County has used federal funds for housing for more than two decades, but it is not adequate for local needs. During the past five years, King County also has used local funds for development and preservation of affordable housing. As a result, residents have more housing choices. Residents who need emergency housing can stay in the community of their choice and their children can continue to attend schools. Local housing funds have also leveraged significant private investment as well as other public funding resources.

Housing for very low-income households is usually developed by private, nonprofit agencies or by public housing authorities. By using federal subsidy programs administered at the state or local level, private for-profit developers and lenders also are active in low-income housing development.

**U-422**                      **King County shall give priority in its housing funding programs to developments that serve low-income individuals and households, prevent displacement of low-income people, or provide low-income housing along with social services.**

**U-423**                      **King County should explore increasing affordable housing opportunities, especially in high cost or gentrifying areas and areas with a shortage or loss of affordable housing, through new programs, development incentives, and changes to funding program guidelines to facilitate new construction, rehabilitation, and acquisition to preserve affordable housing.**

**U-424**                      **King County should seek opportunities to fund programs and projects where County funds are matched by additional public and private loans and contributions, increasing the amount of housing that can be developed.**

**U-425**                      **King County should expand its use of surplus County-owned property and air-rights over County-owned property for affordable housing and should explore its use for other public benefits, such as human services, and consider conveyance of properties to public or non-profit housing developers and agencies at below-market cost. In communities where the home ownership rate is lower than the county average, surplus County property shall be targeted for housing development that would expand the stock of owner-occupied, low- or moderate-income housing.**

**U-426**                      **King County should support the efforts of non-profit developers and housing agencies to increase the supply of housing for low-income households, through technical assistance and funding for capacity building, training, and pre-development activities.**

**U-427**                      **King County should encourage and support efforts by non-profit housing developers, housing agencies, and service providers to develop long term non-government funding sources such as planned giving, endowments, and related economic development ventures.**

## **C. Preservation of Existing Affordable Housing**

This Plan calls for more residential growth by preserving existing housing stock and developing new units on vacant parcels within established neighborhoods. These locations can offer affordable housing that is close to jobs, transportation and services. Housing development can also provide welcome improvements to communities suffering from a lack of investment. However, new development in established communities may result in the loss of existing low-cost housing. For example, when existing affordable housing stock is demolished or upgraded to create market rate units, neighborhoods lose housing for its low-income residents. Low-cost housing is a community resource we should strive to preserve.

Redevelopment policies must be balanced with the need to preserve existing low-cost housing and neighborhoods. Retention of affordable housing can be encouraged through appropriate zoning and development regulations, financial incentives, rehabilitation programs, historic preservation, and acquisition strategies.

Additionally, preservation of affordable housing minimizes health and safety risks and provides residential stability. Historic features to existing buildings are also preserved. In combination, these efforts increase livability and help establish the character of existing neighborhoods.

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>U-428</b> | <b>King County should develop and expand incentives and subsidy programs to preserve affordable housing threatened by market forces and expiring federal subsidies. Relocation assistance and replacement housing should be developed, where feasible, to help low-income households when displacement is unavoidable.</b>                            |
| <b>U-429</b> | <b>King County should explore land use and financial incentives to preserve and improve existing housing in redeveloping areas through the use of programs such as transfer of development rights, tax credits and tax abatements for low-income housing and tax abatements and restoration loans for housing designated as an historic landmark.</b> |
| <b>U-430</b> | <b>King County should assist owners of rental properties serving low- and moderate-income residents to acquire financing for building health and safety improvements in exchange for long-term agreements to maintain affordable rents.</b>   |
| <b>U-431</b> | <b>King County should work with financial institutions and other housing agencies to expand resources for housing rehabilitation through techniques such as reverse mortgage programs and loan pools.</b>   |
| <b>U-432</b> | <b>King County should coordinate preservation of existing affordable housing with city and County historic preservation programs and incentives, and should promote preservation and restoration of significant historic features in the rehabilitation of existing buildings and sites for housing.</b>  |
| <b>U-433</b> | <b>King County should support on-going efforts to maintain and preserve existing mobile home parks as a source of affordable housing for low-income homeowners through zoning, funding for acquisition and rehabilitation of parks and homes.</b>   |
| <b>U-434</b> | <b>King County should consider the constraints of rehabilitation, legalization of accessory dwelling units, and historic preservation, so usable structures are rehabilitated to an appropriate level of safety and habitability.</b>   |

## **D. Access to Housing**

An important goal of addressing affordable housing needs is the successful integration of housing for low-income households into the larger community. This can be accomplished by:

- Siting community facilities and affordable housing with convenient access to employment, transportation and services;
- Adopting favorable land use policies and regulations;
- Increasing housing choices for special needs residents;
- Making reasonable accommodations for people living with disabilities;
- Permitting group living situations with supportive services; and
- Establishing positive relationships with neighbors of affordable housing.

Publicly funded developments can contribute to increasing access to housing for lower income and special needs residents through new construction or acquisition and rehabilitation of existing housing.

For special needs groups, public policies favor community-based, independent living in small residences such as single-family homes or apartments. These policies are supported by the King County Fair Housing Ordinance as well as state and federal laws that prohibit housing discrimination against protected classes, including people with disabilities.

- U-435**                      **King County shall promote opportunities for publicly funded housing, including housing for low-income people with special needs, by:**
- a.        Adopting land use policies and regulations that treat publicly funded housing and other low-income housing the same as housing of a similar size and density;**
  - b.        Adopting funding and program policies that encourage integration of assisted housing within communities and a fair distribution of publicly funded housing throughout the county. However, mandatory dispersion requirements which limit where publicly funded housing may locate, should not be applied, and**
  - c.        Encouraging developers and owners of publicly funded housing units to undertake activities to establish and maintain positive relationships with neighbors.**
- U-436**                      **King County shall make reasonable accommodations in its rules, policies, practices and services when such accommodations may be necessary to afford persons with disabilities equal opportunity to use or enjoy a dwelling.**
- U-437**                      **King County shall prohibit special requirements through land-use regulations, restrictive covenants and conditional or special use permits that limit the ability of persons from protected classes (as defined in the King County Fair Housing Ordinance) to live in residences of their choice.**
- U-438**                      **King County shall permit group living situations, including those where residents receive such supportive services as counseling, foster care or medical supervision, within a single family house or apartment.**
- U-439**                      **King County should work with housing industry representatives to identify and remove barriers (such as real estate marketing, finance or insurance practices) that restrict housing choices and opportunities for low and moderate-income people.**
- U-440**                      **King County should use land use planning and funding programs to help site community facilities and assisted publicly funded housing so that low- and moderate-income residents and the elderly have convenient access to community and transportation services.**

## **E. Reducing Development Costs**

Rising costs have contributed to increases in rents and housing prices at all price levels. These costs are associated with land acquisition, construction, financing, permit processes, roads and utilities and market demand. Although some of these cost increases fall outside the control of local governments, others are directly affected by public policy decisions. Public policies should be evaluated for implications related to the cost of housing development. Cost-saving approaches should be studied. Strategies for increasing favorable zoning, regulations and infrastructure can significantly cut housing development costs. These will help curtail rising housing costs and increase the amount of new, affordable housing units.

- U-441**                      **King County should pursue land use policies and regulations that result in lower development costs without loss of adequate public review, environmental quality or public safety and do not reduce design quality, inhibit infrastructure financing strategies, or increase maintenance costs for public facilities.**
- U-442**                      **King County shall continue to improve development standards to allow higher densities and flexibility of housing types in all residential zones, in order to best accommodate the environmental conditions on the site and the surrounding neighborhood when planning housing developments.**
- U-443**                      **King County should encourage the use of areawide Environmental Impact Statements when plans are developed for activity centers, areas identified for redevelopment or other neighborhoods to provide a more complete analysis of cumulative environmental impacts and reduce the time and cost of environmental review for individual developments.**
- U-444**                      **King County shall seek to minimize the time necessary to process development permits to meet affordable housing and environmental goals and community and aesthetic concerns.**
- U-445**                      **King County should encourage the formation of common development codes and standards with cities, sewer and water districts and other permitting agencies to increase predictability and reduce development costs.**
- U-446**                      **King County should develop new partnerships with public and private lending institutions to find solutions that reduce housing financing costs for both builders and consumers.**

## **F. New Housing Models**

The characteristics of people seeking housing continue to change. Today, there are more single adults living alone or in shared housing than ever before. More families are single-parent households. Many households have two parents working full-time. As the population ages, more seniors will need housing.

King County can assist in the development of housing types that meet the needs of these individuals and families by funding affordable housing, revising development standards and/or expediting permit processing. Demonstration projects can provide needed housing for low-income households and test new models for housing simultaneously.

- U-447**                      **King County should assist in development of innovative, affordable demonstration projects by exploring alternative land development, flexible development standards, and construction techniques.**

- U-448** King County should encourage new housing models by supporting projects such as owner-built housing, land trusts for rental and ownership housing, and other innovative developments.
- U-449** King County should encourage development of residential communities that achieve lower prices and rents through shared common houses, open spaces and community facilities.

## **G. Direct Assistance to Households**

In many cases, the most effective form of housing assistance is direct assistance to low or moderate-income households. This approach is commonly used for first-time homebuyer programs, which provide reduced-rate mortgages or assistance with closing costs. These forms of assistance increase options for homebuyers and enable them to find housing they prefer. Federal programs also provide direct rental assistance to low-income households to help pay rent in public and privately owned rental housing.

Direct assistance is also an effective strategy in the prevention of homelessness. Many King County residents are at risk of losing their housing because they have no financial reserves and are paying a disproportionate amount of their monthly income for housing. Nonpayment of rent accounts for the majority of evictions. Defaults on mortgages can lead to households seeking emergency housing. Housing services such as counseling, information distribution, referrals and short-term rental assistance can help prevent homelessness or minimize the time that an individual or family must spend in an emergency shelter.

### **1. Homeowner Assistance**

- U-450** King County should work with local lenders to expand assistance for first-time homebuyers, including homebuyer education and counseling, low-cost financing and assistance with down payments and closing costs.
- U-451** King County should provide financial assistance for housing rehabilitation to low-income home owners, including owners of mobile homes residing in parks, and through community-based repair programs, such as tool banks or painting programs.

### **2. Renter Assistance and Homeless Prevention**

- U-452** King County should support programs that help prevent homelessness, such as emergency rental assistance, mortgage default counseling, and improvements to emergency services referral networks.
- U-453** King County should support programs that assist low-income renters to remain in or to gain access to private market housing, such as revolving loan funds that cover utility and damage deposits, and rental assistance programs.
- U-454** King County should support programs that provide landlord-tenant counseling, workshops and mediation in landlord-tenant disputes, as well as legislation which protects the rights of tenants and landlords, such as fair rental contracts.

## **H. Balancing Jobs and Housing**

As the population of the Puget Sound region grows, King County is expected to remain the major employment center of the region. As job growth occurs, the workers for these jobs must be

accommodated with adequate opportunities for housing. If a balance of job growth and housing availability is not achieved, these workers will need to live longer distances away from their jobs , thus increasing pressures upon transportation systems.

**U-455**

**King County shall work with the Growth Management Planning Council or its successor and the private sector to support development of an adequate supply of housing commensurate with job growth within the county and its cities. To attain this goal, King County shall:**

- a. Establish Countywide Planning Policies on jobs-housing balance by December 31, 2001;**
- b. Establish performance measures to gauge how jurisdictions are accommodating growth by December 31, 2002;**
- c. Participate in buildable lands inventories, market analyses and other studies to evaluate if sufficient land capacity is available for residential development**
- d. Work with cities to ensure additional actions are taken throughout the county to accommodate and promote residential development when job growth causes great demand for housing and severe shortages in the availability of housing for new workers in the county.**

---

---

# V. Human Services

---

---

People are King County's most valuable resource. Their well being affects the prosperity of the region. King County's vision for the future includes livable, safe communities that are attractive to families, thriving cities, healthy rural communities and a robust economy. The availability of human services is an essential component of this vision.

Regardless of age, cultural background, income or family size, *everyone* is likely to need human services at some point. Human services range from youth recreation programs to mental illness programs to social programs for senior citizens. Many needs associated with human services are circumstantial and have nothing to do with income. Any one can have trouble locating quality childcare. Any one may need help dealing with family violence or substance abuse problems. Naturally, people with low incomes have the highest needs for human services, including help in meeting such basic needs as food, housing, health care and job training.

King County helps address the human service needs of its residents in many ways, including financial assistance for programs that serve resident who lack resources to meet basic needs. Although there are many funding sources, the amount is inadequate to meet rising human service needs. A large portion of King County's resources for human services comes from the State of Washington. This money is mandated to be spent on particular groups, such as people with developmental disabilities, people with mental illness, people with substance abuse problems and veterans. The County also accesses its own current expense fund to support other human services.

The policies in this section reflect the intent of the *King County Framework Policies for Human Services* adopted by the King County Council in 1999.

## A. King County's Role in Human Services

Over the years, King County has become a regional leader in providing human services. Activities include:

- **Resource Development and Administration:** King County works aggressively to direct federal, state, and private resources to our jurisdiction, and, where appropriate, administer available funds.
- **Funder:** King County uses a portion of current expense and criminal justice funds to support a variety of health, human services and housing programs for people in need.
- **Planner and Advocate:** King County is proactive in anticipating and responding to the changing needs of residents and communities.
- **Partnerships:** The County works with a variety of public and private partners to design, implement, and evaluate better ways of providing human services and conducting associated business.

### U-501

**King County, in partnership with other jurisdictions, should help provide access to a range of prevention, intervention and rehabilitative human services for all residents of King County. Access to human services should be available in all areas of the county. In order to achieve the goal of equitable countywide distribution, residential human service facilities should be encouraged to locate in areas of King County where factors such as high property costs currently discourage their location. In communities where there is a disproportionate share of human service facilities and providers**

located, King County should provide community amenities such as parks, transit improvements, sidewalks, and community centers.

- U-502** King County should lead the development and implementation of quality, countywide human service systems for its mandated service areas (mental health, drug and alcohol, people with developmental disabilities, veterans, and public health services). King County should execute this role chiefly through the mandates, guidelines, and funding provided by the State of Washington and/or the federal government.
- U-503** King County, in partnership with other jurisdictions, should support non-mandated regional human service systems for persons most in need.
- U- 504** King County should provide local services such as family, youth, and senior social and recreation programs; local food and clothing banks and community referral for residents of the unincorporated area.

## **B. King County's Human Service Goals**

The five community goals listed in U-505 were developed through a county-wide community process sponsored by United Way of King County. All of the County's human services activities should support one or more of these goals.

### **1. Community Goals**

- U-505** King County should promote healthy families and safe communities by supporting activities that help attain the following community goals throughout King County:
- a. Food to eat and a roof overhead. Ensure that the essential food and housing needs of all people in King County are met.
  - b. Supportive relationships within families, neighborhoods, and communities. Ensure all people in King County experience positive and supportive relationships in their families and communities.
  - c. A safe haven from all forms of violence and abuse. Ensure that all people in King County are safe and feel secure in schools, in their homes, and in their communities.
  - d. Health care to be as physically and mentally fit as possible. Promote and enhance the health of all people in King County, and assist them to attain and maintain the greatest functional independence as possible.
  - e. Education and job skills to lead an independent life. Help all people in King County become as economically self sufficient as their abilities permit.
- U-506** King County policies and regulations should help promote easy access to jobs, housing, and services. In establishing and carrying out policies and regulations regarding land use, transportation, economic development, facilities, and related areas, King County should promote access to and availability of human services and affordable housing for low-income residents and communities.
- U-507** King County should ensure that its involvement in human services is sensitive to the cultural, economic, and social diversity of King County. Toward that end, King County should promote culturally competent and culturally relevant service delivery; uphold federal, state, and local laws against discrimination; work to remove obstacles that impair residents'

ability to access human services and affordable housing; and provide opportunities for diverse representation of people and interests on King County's boards, commissions, advisory committees, and planning processes.

- U-508** King County should support efforts to break the cycle of poverty, promote personal responsibility and reduce the overall need for human services. This includes organizing and empowering residents and communities to be involved in the decision-making that affects their lives. Services supported by King County should do so in a manner that helps foster self-determination and self-sufficiency to the greatest extent possible.

## **2. Ensuring and Enhancing Human Services Resources**

- U-509** King County should work in the federal, state, and local government arenas, and with the private sector, to garner additional human services and affordable housing resources for King County residents to help further the community goals. This work may include legislative advocacy, pursuit of grant funds, regulatory changes, and related actions.

## **C. Assessing Use of Resources and Achievement of Goals**

King County should ensure that human services funding and other activities are directed in an effective and appropriate manner. The policies below and the *King County Framework Policies for Human Services* outline an assessment and evaluation process to help ensure the County is responsive to ongoing changes in achieving community goals. The assessment and evaluation process focuses on the discretionary spending on human services and the necessary coordination with mandated human services as appropriate.

- U-510** King County should conduct an ongoing assessment and evaluation cycle to help ensure its activities and use of resources for human services are responsive to changing needs in the five Community Goal areas and other King County human services priorities.
- U-511** King County should periodically, but no fewer than every three years, produce a King County Human Services Recommendation Report that describes strategies that King County will pursue during the period covered by the Report.
- U-512** King County should encourage and facilitate broad community participation—including consumers and providers of services—in developing the King County Human Services Report, and in the provision and evaluation of human services.
- U-513** King County should actively coordinate with other local, regional, state, federal, and private human services efforts in order to ensure that its human service activities, including the use of resources, complement the programs and activities of others. Wherever feasible, King County should participate in joint assessments with other funders to analyze human service trends and needs.
- U-514** Together with its community partners, King County should help to establish and monitor key indicators of overall social and health conditions in King County. The information shall be used to help determine progress towards meeting the five community goals identified in U-505.

---

# VI. Community Action Strategies

---

A number of factors affect how the public views the desirability of any neighborhood. These factors include, but are not limited to, the:

- availability of housing with reasonable prices and quality,
- close proximity or reasonable access to jobs and shopping,
- quality and accessibility of schools and parks,
- neighborhood crime rate,
- proximity to land uses that create impacts such as high levels of noise or objectionable odors, and
- cost, availability, quality and conditions of the public infrastructure (i.e. water, sewer, roads and transit).

Perceived and actual deficiencies with one or more of these factors can detract from the desirability of any neighborhood. This lack of desirability often reduces the willingness to make either housing or business investments in these neighborhoods, thereby further perpetuating the less than desirable status. This unwillingness to make investments in certain neighborhoods poses a significant barrier to infill and redevelopment, annexation by cities or achievement of growth targets adopted by King County.

King County needs to address these factors to the maximum possible extent to reduce the number of barriers that work against meeting stated goals. Some of these factors (e.g. schools and noise levels from freeways or airport flight paths) cannot be directly addressed by King County. Other factors, such as jobs and shopping, parks or neighborhood crime rates, can be and are addressed through the implementation of the economic development policies of this plan or through adjustments and reallocation of parks and police resources.

The remaining factors are public water, sewer and transportation services. These services are necessary to allow new residential and commercial development. Planning for these services are required to be addressed by the Growth Management Act. King County does not provide water service. In regards to sewer service, it provides only treatment facilities and major trunk lines to transport sewage to treatment facilities. Of these three GMA-mandated services, King County's primary responsibility is to provide transportation (transit and roads) services. Thus, the policies of this section will be focused upon transportation infrastructure needs.

The Growth Management Act requires King County to carefully plan for transportation service needs before new growth is allowed. The Countywide Planning Policies call for local jurisdictions to direct growth first to Urban Centers and areas with existing transportation infrastructure capacity, second to areas which are urbanized and where transportation infrastructure improvements can be extended cost-effectively, and last to areas requiring major investments of funds to extend transportation infrastructure improvements.

Because funding for all necessary transportation needs at the same time is not possible with the sources currently available to King County, the link between land use and public spending for transportation services is critical. Thus, a growth phasing mechanism is necessary to maintain that link.

In the past, the Urban Reserve (UR) zone was used as the primary implementation tool for growth phasing. However, it was determined that the application of the UR zone often created an unnecessary obstacle to growth even when adequate levels of the required water and sewer services were readily available. More recently, King County's growth phasing was implemented through the Service and Finance Strategy, which focused King County's transportation service funding towards specific urban areas in accordance with the adequacy of water and sewer services.

A further refinement of the Service and Finance Strategy has culminated in a new initiative called Community Action Strategies. The Community Action Strategies utilizes a set of criteria that will allow King County to better target funding for transportation capital projects in a manner that addresses each subarea's most pressing needs and provides the greatest overall benefit for each public dollar spent.

The Community Action Strategies Priority Map, the subarea capital plans and the policies in the King County Comprehensive Plan will guide King County in its identification, prioritization, and funding of transportation capital projects.

**U-601                      The Community Action Strategies Subarea Priority Map shall be used to guide King County in its identification, prioritization, and funding of transportation capital projects. The Map is intended to be long term and should be reviewed during the Comprehensive Plan's major update cycle.**

#### **A.        Defining the Unique Needs of Each Urban Subarea**

There are eight major subareas of urban unincorporated in King County. Each of these subareas is unique in terms of their character, the diversity of issues that their residents care most about, and the type of solutions necessary to address specific needs. The subarea transportation needs generally fall into three categories.

##### **1. "Existing capacity, operational and safety deficiency" Needs**

All of the eight subareas have existing capacity, operational and safety deficiencies at one level or another. At one extreme, the "older" West Hill and North Highline subareas have pedestrian safety as their most pressing need. On the other extreme, some faster growing newer subareas, such as East Sammamish and North Soos Creek, have a greater need for capacity improvements to address level-of-service deficiencies stemming from existing residents and projects in the pipeline.

##### **2. "Urban Retrofit" Needs**

The "older" West Hill and North Highline subareas consist of many long-established urban neighborhoods located in close proximity to the city of Seattle. Many of the neighborhoods in these subareas were built prior to World War II and almost all were built before 1970.

As long-established neighborhoods, the potential for additional growth is limited. Therefore, funding for additional capacity-increasing transportation improvements provides, at best, a marginal benefit in regards to meeting growth targets.

The roads systems for many parts of the West Hill and North Highline subareas are considered deficient by current urban road design standards due to the lack of sidewalks and the prevalence of open ditch drainage systems. These deficiencies have been cited as reasons for the reluctance to fund infill and redevelopment proposals in these areas. The deficiencies also discourage adjacent cities from annexing these subareas. Therefore, there is a greater overall benefit to be derived from funding of urban retrofit improvements that would bring these roads systems to current standards.

### **3. “New Capacity” Needs**

The remaining six “newer” subareas of North Soos Creek, Juanita/Kingsgate, East Renton, East Federal Way, East Sammamish, and Lea Hill are urban areas in which the majority of the neighborhoods were built after 1970. While some of the neighborhoods have deficiencies like those found in the West Hill and North Highline subareas (having been built prior to the requirement for urban road design standards in 1980), the greater majority of neighborhoods are constructed with infrastructure improvements that are consistent with current road and health standards.

The most pressing need for the newer subareas is related to roadway capacity and achieving levels of service (concurrency). Because the newer subareas have a significant amount of undeveloped (or substantially underutilized) lands, they have substantial potential for additional growth. There has been great interest in locating within many of the newer subareas, as indicated by the rate of growth.

However, the level of funding for capacity-increasing transportation improvements in the newer subareas has not been commensurate with the higher growth rates. Achieving and maintaining concurrency is a challenge that must be addressed in order to meet growth targets in the newer subareas. Therefore, capacity-increasing transportation improvements will yield greater benefit in terms of future growth and are given higher consideration in the newer subareas versus the older subareas.

**U-602                      King County shall evaluate subarea needs in accordance with the type of infrastructure deficiencies that most need to be addressed and that act as barriers to infill, redevelopment or annexation, or to achieving growth targets. Upon identifying the unique needs of each subarea, King County shall implement appropriate programs or capital projects to address such deficiencies.**

### **B.        Establishing the Priority Ranking of Subareas**

#### **1. “Existing capacity, operational and safety deficiencies” priorities**

The continued funding existing for transportation projects that alleviate existing deficiencies is a high priority for all eight subareas.

#### **2. “Urban retrofit” priorities**

The subareas are ranked as “high”, “medium”, or “low” priority for urban retrofit improvements based on the overall percentage of the road system within the subarea that does not meet current urban road design standards, and on the cost of improvements versus the existing residential density.

#### **3. “New capacity” priorities**

The subareas are ranked as “high”, “medium”, or “low” priority for new capacity improvements using the following criteria:

- future growth potential,
- water and sewer availability,
- transit availability,
- affordable housing,
- job availability,
- existing traffic congestion, and
- the ratio of the cost of unfunded projects needed to provide additional capacity for new development versus existing and future residential development potential.

**U-603                      The major urban unincorporated subareas in King County shall be shown on the Community Action Strategies Subarea Priority Map and shall reflect priority rankings as either high, medium or low.**

**U-604                      Projects addressing existing capacity, operational and safety deficiencies shall be a high priority in all subareas.**

**U-605**                      **Urban retrofit projects priority rankings will be based on amount of the road system within subarea that need upgrades to current urban road design standards.**

**U-606**                      **New capacity projects priority rankings will be based on future growth potential, water and sewer availability, transit availability, affordable housing, jobs availability, existing traffic congestion, and the ratio of the cost of unfunded transportation capacity projects to future residential units.**

### **C.        Priorities for Transportation Funding**

King County transportation improvements essentially fall into three areas:

- Urban retrofit improvements is the reconstruction of existing street systems to current urban road design standards (curb, gutter and sidewalk, enclosed drainage, and adequate surface water detention facilities) without adding more than a modest amount of additional capacity (i.e. the addition of more than one travel lane).
- Operational and safety improvements (i.e. signals, turn lanes, lighting, crosswalks) that improve the intersection efficiency or reduce accident rates amongst motorists and pedestrians.
- Capacity improvements designed to raise the level-of-service for segment of roadway (construction of new roads or widening of existing roads by two or more lanes).

#### **1. Existing Capacity, Operational and Safety Deficiencies**

King County's intends to follow through on current commitments to fund transportation projects that alleviate existing deficiencies on roadways which are not operating efficiently, safely or at adequate levels of service, regardless of subarea location or ranking.

**U-607**                      **King County shall continue to invest in existing and pipeline transportation projects needed to correct existing level of service, operational and safety deficiencies throughout all the eight subareas.**

#### **2. Urban retrofit improvements**

The greatest need for retrofit improvements is in the North Highline and West Hill subareas. Other subareas either do not have significant segments of substandard road improvement or do not have residential densities to allow cost effective re-construction.

**U-608**                      **In the Urban Retrofit-High Priority subareas, retrofit improvement projects shall be a higher priority than projects for new capacity.**

**U-609**                      **In the Urban Retrofit-Medium Priority subareas, retrofit improvement projects shall be limited to the construction of short segments that interconnect existing, discontinuous roadways that are constructed to urban standards.**

**U-610**                      **In the Urban Retrofit-Low Priority subareas, retrofit improvements shall only occur in conjunction with major reconstruction projects.**

### **3. New Capacity-Related Transportation Improvements**

After meeting its current commitments, King County's next funding priority is for new capacity-related transportation capital facility improvements needed to maintain concurrency for future growth. Such improvements typically entail or require the construction of additional roadways or traffic lanes.

- U-611**                      **The amount of money available to fund new capacity projects will be determined only after the allocation of funds to projects that correct existing level of service or operational and safety deficiencies.**
- U-612**                      **Local match funding of a new capacity project successfully competing for grant funds shall be considered a high priority regardless of which subarea(s) the project is located.**
- U-613**                      **New Capacity-High Priority subareas shall be the first considered for funding of new capacity projects.**
- U-614**                      **New Capacity-Medium Priority subareas shall have funding for new capacity improvements intended to accommodate additional growth only after new capacity projects in High Priority subareas are funded.**
- U-615**                      **New Capacity-Low Priority subareas shall not have funding for new capacity improvements intended to accommodate additional growth, until such time as all other capacity needs have been funded.**

#### **D. Identifying and Prioritizing Projects**

Community Action Strategies will be the process by which capital facilities plans will be developed and regularly updated for the eight urban unincorporated subareas. It will be a process involving affected residents, community groups, Unincorporated Area Councils, public service providers, and local businesses and will include a prioritized list of needed capital improvement projects for the subarea.

The Community Action Strategies process will initially focus on transportation capital improvements. However, the process may eventually evolve into a needs assessment tool helping communities determine priorities for other capital projects, such as sewer service extensions, parks and recreation.

- U-616**                      **The Community Action Strategies process will be used to develop and update capital facilities plans that identify and prioritize new transportation capital improvement projects for each of the eight major urban unincorporated subareas of King County.**
- U-617**                      **King County efforts to identify and prioritize new capital projects shall initially focus on the New Capacity-High Priority subareas.**
- U-618**                      **Neighborhood groups, local business organizations, Unincorporated Area Councils, local jurisdictions, and other public service providers will be invited to actively participate in developing and updating the Community Action Strategy for their area.**
- U-619**                      **While identification and prioritization for new transportation capital projects will be the initial focus of the Community Action Strategies process, the process may eventually be expanded to identify and prioritize other types of capital projects related to growth.**